



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2021-0887; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00045-R; Amendment 39-21910; AD 2022-02-13]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Airbus Helicopters Model EC120B helicopters. This AD was prompted by a report of corrosion found on the external tail boom skin, under the Very High Frequency (VHF) antenna. This AD requires inspecting the tail boom at the VHF antenna attachments and depending on the results, repairing or modifying the tail boom skin, as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is incorporated by reference. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: For EASA material incorporated by reference (IBR) in this final rule, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find the EASA material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. For Airbus Helicopters service information identified in this final rule, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 North Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at <https://www.airbus.com/helicopters/services/technical-support.html>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel,

Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. Service information that is IBRed is also available at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0887.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0887; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this final rule, the EASA AD, any comments received, and other information. The address for Docket Operations is U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gregory Koenig, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe & Administrative Services Section, Chicago ACO Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 2300 E Devon Ave., Des Plaines, IL 60018; telephone (847) 294-7127; email Gregory.L.Koenig@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2021-0015, dated January 13, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0015), to correct an unsafe condition for Airbus Helicopters (AH), formerly Eurocopter, Eurocopter France, Model EC 120 B helicopters.

The FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to Airbus Helicopters Model EC120B helicopters. The NPRM published in the *Federal Register* on October 28, 2021 (86 FR 59655). The NPRM was prompted by a report of corrosion found on the external tail boom skin, under the VHF antenna of an EC120B helicopter. The NPRM proposed to require inspecting the tail boom at the VHF antenna attachments and depending on the results, repairing or modifying the tail boom skin, as specified in EASA AD 2021-0015.

The FAA is issuing this AD to detect corrosion in the area of the external tail boom skin under the VHF antenna and prevent degradation of the tail boom structure. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in a possible roll-over during landing. See EASA AD 2021-0015 for additional background information.

Comments

The FAA received no comments on the NPRM or on the determination of the costs.

Conclusion

These helicopters have been approved by EASA and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with the European Union, EASA has notified the FAA about the unsafe condition described in its AD. The FAA reviewed the relevant data and determined that air safety requires adopting this AD as proposed. Accordingly, the FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these helicopters.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

EASA AD 2021-0015 requires a one-time inspection of the VHF antenna attachments to the tail boom and, depending on the results, corrective action or modification of the tail boom.

This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

Other Related Service Information

The FAA reviewed Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin No. EC120-53A017, Revision 1, dated November 26, 2020. This service information specifies procedures for inspecting and modifying the VHF antenna attachments on the tail boom.

The FAA also reviewed Airbus Helicopters Service Bulletin No. EC120-53-018, Revision 0, dated November 26, 2020. This service information specifies procedures for

repairing the tail boom if there is any corrosion or a crack at the VHF antenna attachments.

Differences Between this AD and the EASA AD

Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2021-0015 specifies “to check for corrosion under the VHF antenna base support,” this AD requires inspecting for corrosion because that action must be accomplished by a mechanic that meets the requirements of 14 CFR part 65 subpart D. Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2021-0015 specifies to “make sure that there is no aluminum oxide (white powder),” “make sure that there is no pitting corrosion,” and “make sure that there are no crack,” this AD requires inspecting for any aluminum oxide (white powder), pitting corrosion, and cracks instead. Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2021-0015 specifies discarding parts, this AD requires removing those parts from service instead.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 89 helicopters of U.S. Registry. Labor rates are estimated at \$85 per work-hour. Based on these numbers, the FAA estimates that operators may incur the following costs in order to comply with this AD.

Inspecting and modifying each tail boom at the VHF attachment takes about 4 work-hours and parts cost about \$4,745, for an estimated cost of \$5,085 per helicopter and \$452,565 for the U.S. fleet.

If required, repairing the VHF antenna attachment at the tail boom takes up to 15 work-hours and parts cost up to \$7,812, for an estimated cost of up to \$9,087 per helicopter.

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA’s authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency’s authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress

charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

This AD will not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This AD will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this AD:

- (1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA amends 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

- 1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

- 2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

2022-02-13 Airbus Helicopters: Amendment 39-21910; Docket No. FAA-2021-0887; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00045-R.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Model EC120B helicopters, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 5302, Rotorcraft Tail Boom.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by a report of corrosion found on the external tail boom skin of a Model EC120B helicopter under the Very High Frequency antenna. The FAA is issuing this AD to detect corrosion in that area and prevent the degradation of the tail boom structure. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in possible roll-over during landing.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Requirements

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, European Union Aviation Safety Agency AD 2021-0015, dated January 13, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0015).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2021-0015

(1) Where EASA AD 2021-0015 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where the service information referenced in paragraph (1) of EASA AD 2021-0015 specifies to check for corrosion, including to “make sure that there is no aluminum oxide (white powder),” “make sure that there is no pitting corrosion,” and “make sure that there are no crack,” this AD requires inspecting for any aluminum oxide (white powder), pitting corrosion, and cracks.

(3) Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2021-0015 specifies discarding parts, this AD requires removing those parts from service.

(4) Where paragraph (4) of EASA AD 2021-0015 requires certain actions prior to the installation of a tail boom on any helicopter, including inspecting the tail boom, for this AD, the requirements of paragraph (h)(2) of this AD also apply to the inspection of the tail boom.

(5) This AD does not mandate compliance with the “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2021-0015.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although the service information referenced in EASA AD 2021-0015 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not include that requirement.

(j) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (k) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(k) Related Information

For more information about this AD, contact Gregory Koenig, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe & Administrative Services Section, Chicago ACO Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 2300 E Devon Ave., Des Plaines, IL 60018; telephone (847) 294-7127; email Gregory.L.Koenig@faa.gov.

(l) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of the service information listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this service information as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless this AD specifies otherwise.

(i) European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2021-0015, dated January 13, 2021.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For EASA AD 2021-0015, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find the EASA material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>.

(4) You may view this service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. This material may be found in the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0887.

(5) You may view this material that is incorporated by reference at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, email fr.inspection@nara.gov, or go to:

<https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued on January 11, 2022.

Lance T. Gant, Director,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2022-02749 Filed: 2/9/2022 8:45 am; Publication Date: 2/10/2022]